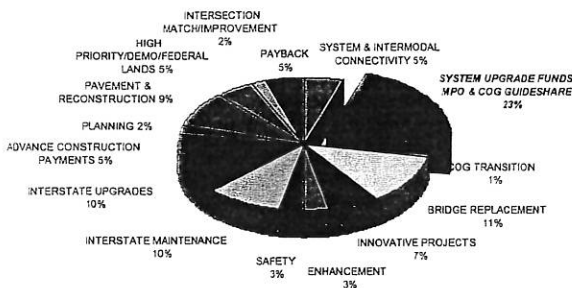


Financing: Upper Savannah Council of Governments receives approximately \$6 million a year in federal transportation funds in the form of Rural Guideshares. Guideshares are allocated from the System Upgrade Program that provides funding for projects identified by the 10 Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the 10 Councils of Governments. The distribution of these funds is based on population.

Figure 6.1
Highway Construction Program
Federal and State Funds



In 1997, the Upper Savannah COG entered into a project acceleration program with the South Carolina Department of Transportation. The project acceleration program utilizes the annual guideshare allocation as a source of debt service for bonds that provide financing to construct projects that may otherwise be cost prohibitive or take many years to build. Over an eight-year period, \$74 million in projects will be completed. These four projects include US 25, Western Bypass, SC 72 in Abbeville, and SC 72, Parts 1 and 2 in Laurens County.

The project acceleration program is structured so that a portion of the guideshare allocation will be used for debt service through the year 2022. During the construction period, which extends to 2005, all of the guideshare is earmarked to the acceleration program. Beginning in 2006, approximately \$3.2 million will be available to the region to fund new projects.

To provide a 20-year funding estimate for Greenwood County, there are two possible scenarios. First, Greenwood would continue to compete for the rural guideshare available to the Upper Savannah COG. Using the existing funding allocation and accounting for debt service in the acceleration program, the Upper Savannah Region will receive approximately \$72 million in guideshare over the next 20 years.

If Greenwood becomes an MPO after the 2000 Census, the area would have a dedicated funding source to implement projects. The funding allocation would be calculated by applying Greenwood's share of the state's urban population to the total available guideshare. Since the 2000 population data is not available and guideshare funding is subject to change, it is difficult to estimate actual amount of funding Greenwood would receive as an MPO.

For comparison, assuming Greenwood would have the minimum of 50,000 in urban population to be designated as an MPO, the area would likely be the smallest MPO in terms of population in the state. Based on the funding formula, this suggests that Greenwood would be

working with a very limited guideshare allocation. As an MPO, Greenwood's guideshare would be deducted from the funding previously allocated to the Upper Savannah Region and capped at an amount equal to the area's proportion of population for the region. Table 6.1 illustrates the FY 2000-2001 funding allocation based on MPO populations in South Carolina.

Table 6.1
POPULATION AND FUNDING BY MPO

MPO	MPO Pop(1990)	MPO Pop % of state	Annual Guideshare
Anderson	67,213	1.9%	\$2,206,941
Augusta/Aiken	97,606	2.7%	\$3,204,896
Charleston	426,149	12.2%	\$13,992,615
Columbia	422,125	12.1%	\$13,860,487
Greenville	296,533	8.5%	\$9,736,670
Florence	69,878	2.0%	\$2,294,446
Myrtle Beach	136,254	3.9%	\$4,473,904
Rock Hill/Fort Mill	85,857	2.4%	\$2,819,117
Spartanburg	158,754	4.5%	\$5,212,692
Sumter	79,010	2.2%	\$2,594,296

Which funding scenario benefits Greenwood the most is debatable. If Greenwood remains in the COG program, the area would compete with five other counties in the region for the estimated \$72 million. As the largest economic and population center in the Upper Savannah region, Greenwood County is positioned favorably to compete for future rural guideshare funds for the region.

Alternative Financing

With limited federal and state funding available to meet many of the states transportation needs, some counties have chosen to implement a Special Local Option Sales Tax. Provided for under the

Capital Project Sales Tax Act, county governing bodies may impose a one-percent sales tax ordinance, subject to a referendum. Elections for the capital projects tax and transportation tax must be held during a general election in November. If approved, the tax becomes effective May 1 following the election. The maximum time period that a special sales tax can be levied is seven years. A variety of improvements are eligible under the Capital Sales Tax Act and may include the following types of projects:

- new road construction, road widening, bridges, repaving;
- administration buildings including court houses, jails, hospitals, fire stations;
- cultural, recreational, or historic facilities;
- water and sewer; and
- flood control and drainage.

Of the 28 counties that impose some form of the one-percent local option sales tax, three counties currently use the capital tax for road improvements.

In 1997, York County passed a special local option one-percent sales tax to fund a variety of road projects including new road construction, widening of existing facilities, intersections, and resurfacing projects. The York County program is projected to generate approximately \$99 million dollars over a seven-year period. The sales tax proceeds are also being used as a local match for State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) funding.

In 1998, Beaufort County passed a special local option one-percent sales tax to fund the SC 170 project. The sales tax proceeds are also being used as a local match for State Infrastructure Bank

for the project has been revised to approximately \$29 million dollars. Any unspent tax proceeds will be used to further enhance the SC 170 corridor or be reallocated to other existing transportation projects.

In 2000, Aiken County passed a local option sales tax to fund a specific list of projects including resurfacing, storm drainage, streetscapes, parks, greenways, a civic center, a community center, sidewalks, and other capital improvements such as police cars and fire trucks. A portion of the proceeds will be used as a local match for potential SIB funding to complete the Bobby Jones Expressway. The tax proceeds are expected to generate approximately \$54 million dollars over a seven-year period.

For planning purposes, the special local option tax was considered as a potential funding source for road projects in Greenwood County. As a result of the proposed amendment on the 2000 election ballot to allow counties to use an additional one-percent sales tax to reduce or eliminate vehicle property tax, the Board of Economic Advisors estimated sales tax revenues for counties across the state. Table 6.2 illustrates the projected revenues that would be available through a one-percent sales tax for Greenwood County.

Table 6.2
PROJECTED SALES TAX REVENUES

YEAR	REVENUES
2001	\$8,700,000
2002	\$9,200,000
2003	\$9,800,000
2004	\$10,500,000
2005	\$10,900,000
2006	\$11,500,000
2007	\$12,000,000

Source: Board of Economic Advisors

The projected revenues reflect a 6% annual increase to account for continued growth in the economy. Assuming a seven-year tax levy, a one-percent sales tax could generate approximately \$73 million dollars for local road projects in Greenwood County.

Counties and municipalities may also impose local hospitality taxes on food, beverages, accommodations and admissions. A referendum is not required to implement an accommodations tax and there is no maximum time for which the tax may be imposed. This source of revenue was not considered for Greenwood County for two reasons. First, the potential revenue from an accommodations tax would be significantly less than the local option sales tax. Secondly, the South Carolina Code of Laws restricts the use of proceeds from an accommodations tax to projects that support a tourism function.

Table 6.3

Greenwood Thoroughfare Plan Project Recommendations

RANKING SCORE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECT SCOPE	FROM	TO	CONST.	TOTAL COST	LENGTH	COST / MI
39	NORTH EMERALD - PHASE I (S-236)	WIDEN TO 5 LANES	US 25	EMPIRE RD (S-528)	\$4,982,210	\$4,982,210	1.67 Mi	\$2,983,359
39	US 25 BYPASS	WIDEN TO 5 LANES	US 25/178	E. CAMBRIDGE (S-29)	\$13,000,000	\$17,160,000	3.50 Mi	\$4,902,857
37	SOUTH EMERALD - PHASE II (S-100)	WIDEN TO 5 LANES	EMPIRE RD (S-528)	SC 246	\$10,400,000	\$13,560,000	3.83 Mi	\$3,540,470
36	SC 246 - PHASE I	WIDEN TO 5 LANES	SC 702	NORTH OF BUCKLEVEL (S-271)	\$14,800,000	\$19,000,000	5.00 Mi	\$3,800,000
32	SC 246 - PHASE II	WIDEN TO 5 LANES	NORTH OF BUCKLEVEL (S-271)	US 25	\$23,500,000	\$30,100,000	8.59 Mi	\$3,504,075
31	SC 34	WIDEN TO 5 LANES AND PROVIDE FOR BIKE/PEDESTRIAN USE. PROJECT IS WITHIN THE HERITAGE CORRIDOR	TOWN OF NINETY SIX	EAST OF ORANGE STREET (S-302)	\$20,500,000	\$27,000,000	7.38 Mi	\$3,658,537
16	MATHIS (S-108) / SPRING (S-135) CONNECTOR	NEW 2 LANE FACILITY TO ELIMINATE OFFSET AND PROVIDE PARRALLEL FACILITY TO MAIN ST.	MAXWELL (SC 10)	MARION (S-249)	\$1,890,300	\$2,540,700	0.50 Mi	\$5,081,400
	TOTALS				\$89,072,510	\$114,342,910	30.47 Mi	

Cost Estimates:

Of the original 12 projects that were evaluated with the Greenwood model, the Steering Committee selected seven of the projects for cost estimates and ranking. The decision to narrow the list of potential projects was based on cost issues and the reasonableness of each project.

SCDOT Preconstruction and District 2 staff conducted field reviews of each

Ranking Criteria:

project to consider specific design issues and constraints. In addition to a unit cost per mile, consideration was given to bridge and culvert structures, signals, railroad crossings, traffic mobilization, utilities, relocations, and contingencies. All costs are in present day dollars (2000). Any future use of the estimates should include an appropriate inflation factor to adjust for increased costs.

See Appendix F for detailed cost estimate information.

The Steering Committee used a project ranking process to provide a quantitative assessment of the need and overall importance for the final seven projects considered in the Plan. The ranking criteria are divided into three components: Traffic and Access Criteria; Growth and Development Criteria; and Social, Cultural, and Environmental Resources. The maximum score a project could receive is 50 points. Points could be deducted from a project's score

if the proposed improvement was inconsistent with the local comprehensive plan, or if the project was perceived to have potential adverse impacts to social, cultural, or environmental resources.

See Appendix B for additional ranking criteria information.